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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Air-to-Air Missiles in North Vietnam

25X1 1. This subject has been discussed in detail in two recent memoranda

Since that time there has been no appreciable change in the air defense picture in North Vietnam with regard to the introduction of air-to-air missiles.

2. There are no indications at present that the North Vietnamese have acquired air-to-air missiles (AAM). There have been three incidents since June when US pilots reported the use of air-to-air unguided rockets by the North Vietnamese, the most recent being 25 November. The specific type of rocket being used by the North Vietnamese Air Force is presently unknown, but it is probably the 57-mm unguided rocket which is normally mounted in pods of 8 or 16 each under the wings. Unguided rockets have been in the Chinese Communist and Soviet inventories for years, and they are easily mounted on MIG-15/17s, either individually or in pods. Early models of the MIG-17, for example, can carry from 2 to 16 air-to-air rockets, depending on their size. Later models of the MIG-17 can carry double this number.

3.

The lack of these missiles may be one of the major reasons for the North Vietnamese reluctance to engage US aircraft.

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4. Air-to-air missiles could be introduced into North Vietnam without being detected, and considering the present status of North Vietnamese pilot proficiency could be introduced into operational fighter units with a minimum of training. It is possible that the presence of missiles of these sort will not be detected until they are employed in combat.

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